

REMARKS

Prior to the present paper, claims 19-25, 27, 30, and 31 were pending. The Office Action rejected claims 19-25, 27, 30, and 31. The Applicant has amended claims 19, 21-23, and 27. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in light of the following.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103 (Hand/Winters/Paulsen)

The Office Action rejected claims 19-23, 25, 27, 30, and 31 under U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pub. 2002/0125627 to Hand, hereinafter "Hand", in view of U.S. Prov. Ap. 60/337,409 to Winters, hereinafter "Winters", in view of U.S. 7,390,257 to Paulsen et al., hereinafter "Paulsen". The Applicant respectfully requests the present rejection be withdrawn in light of the following.

A. Claims 19-23, 25, and 30

Each of claims 19-23, 25, and 30 is directed to a gaming machine comprising, among other things a bill acceptor configured to receive bills tendered, and a controller configured to increment a first counter on each occurrence of an acceptance signal of the bill acceptor, increment a second counter on each occurrence of a rejection signal of the bill acceptor, determine a bill acceptance rate using the first and second counters, and detect a malfunction of the bill acceptor based upon the bill acceptance rate. The Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references address detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor. Furthermore, rejecting "faux" or "counterfeit" money as taught by Winters is an appropriate action for a properly functioning bill acceptor. Accordingly, while Winters discloses a mechanism for detecting coin fraud in coin-

counting machines based upon detected "real" and detected "faux" coins, Winters provides no teaching regarding detecting a malfunction of a bill acceptor based upon rejected and accepted bills tendered. Moreover, neither Hand nor Paulsen address aspects of detecting a malfunction of a bill acceptor based upon rejected and accepted bills tendered. Accordingly, the proposed combination fails to arrive at the invention of claims 19-23, 25, and 30. Withdrawal of the present rejection of claims 19-23, 25, and 30 is earnestly solicited.

B. Claims 27 and 31

Each of claims 27 and 31 is directed to a method that comprises, among other things, receiving a bill at the bill acceptor, sensing at least one characteristic of the received bill, generating one of an acceptance signal and a rejection signal using the at least one sensed characteristic, incrementing a respective one of an acceptance counter and a rejection counter based on the respective acceptance and rejection signals, determining a bill acceptance rate of the bill acceptor based on respective cumulated values of the acceptance and rejection counters, and detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor in response to the bill acceptance rating falling below a value.

As explained above, none of the reference is concerned with detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor. Accordingly, the reasons for patentability presented above in regard to claims 19-23, 25, and 30 are generally applicable to the patentability of claims 27 and 31. Thus, withdrawal of the present rejection of claims 27 and 31 is earnestly solicited for at least reasons similar to those presented above in regard to claims 19-23, 25, and 30.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103 (Hand/Winters/Paulsen/Bell)

The Office Action rejected claim 24 under U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hand, in view of Winters, in view of Paulsen, in further view of U.S. 6,722,487 to Bell. Claim 24 includes claim 19 as a base claim and is therefore allowable for at least reasons similar to those presented above in regard to claim 19. Withdrawal of the present rejection of claim 24 is earnestly solicited.

III. Final Matters

The Office Action makes various statements regarding: the pending claims; the Hand, Winder, Paulsen, and Bell references; 35 U.S.C. §103; and the state of the art that are now moot in view of the previously presented amendments and/or remarks. Thus, the Applicant has not addressed all of such statements at the present time. However, the Applicant expressly reserves the right to challenge any of such statements in the future should the need arise.

SUMMARY

The Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Applicant thus requests an expeditious notice of allowability with respect to all pending claims. If the Examiner disagrees, the Applicant requests an Examiner Interview to discuss the pending claims and the restriction/election requirement. The Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at 312-238-8600 to arrange such an interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge additional fees or credit overpayments to the deposit account of McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Account No. 13-0017.

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Respectfully submitted,

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